



Vogtle Nuclear Plant Fact Sheet

Why it is a problem and what needs to be done to protect our communities.

Nuclear Power is Expensive.

The construction of Southern Company's nuclear plant Vogtle near Waynesboro, Georgia in Burke County along the Savannah River was a boondoggle. Original estimates ballooned from \$660 million to more than \$8 billion for two reactors. Now history is repeating itself as Georgia Power and its partners face serious delays and cost increases for the two new reactors under construction - originally estimated at \$14.1 billion and now at \$15.5 billion.

Nuclear Power Puts Our Safety at Risk.

FBI director Robert S. Mueller said, before the Select Committee on Intelligence in the US Senate in February 2005, "Another area we consider target rich and vulnerable is the energy sector, particularly nuclear power plants." Storing dangerous, highly radioactive spent nuclear fuel outside the reactors in casks or transporting it across the country also presents an inviting terrorist target, putting all affected communities at risk. Additionally, the March 2011 nuclear disaster in Japan at the Fukushima Dai-ichi plant highlights how dangerous nuclear power can be for a country's residents and economy. A 1982 Congressional report estimated that if a meltdown occurred at just one of Plant Vogtle's existing reactors, it could cause up to 39,000 immediate injuries with costs of over \$70 billion (in 1980 dollar and Census figures). [U.S. House of Rep., *Calculation of Reactor Accident Consequences for U.S. Nuclear Power Plants (Health Effects & Costs)*, Nov. 1st, 1982. <https://www.nirs.org/reactorwatch/accidents/crac2.pdf>]



Photo courtesy of High Flyer

Nuclear Power Threatens Our Security.

"Nuclear power entails potential security risks, notably the possible misuse of commercial or associated nuclear facilities and operations to acquire technology or materials as a precursor to the acquisition of a nuclear weapons capability." (Future of Nuclear Power, MIT, 2003) Nuclear power reactors create plutonium during their operating cycle—plutonium from which nuclear bombs can be manufactured. Plutonium is one of the most toxic man-made substances known, remaining radioactive for more than 240,000 years. We shouldn't trade carbon reductions for plutonium creation.

Nuclear Power Pollutes.

- **Radioactive spent fuel (nuclear waste) is dangerous** remaining radioactive for millions of years. Our society has yet to find a solution for effective nuclear waste management. More reactors means more nuclear waste in Georgia.
- **There is no safe level of radiation, no 'safe' dose.** Radiation exposures damage reproductive cells and can lead to mutations from generation to generation in humans and animals. Each new exposure to radiation adds to the risk of: genetic mutations and cancer, damage to the immune system, spontaneous abortion, mental retardation, spina bifida, heart disease, leukemia and more. [Nat'l Academy of Sciences, BEIR V & VII; World Health Organization, & more.]
- **Nuclear power threatens our water supplies.** Plant Vogtle, along the imperiled Savannah River, currently withdraws over 60 million gallons of water per day, returning only 1/3 of that amount. More reactors will result in much more water needed--competing with other important needs here in Georgia. With the proposed expansion of Plant Vogtle, more water will be lost as steam from the two existing and two proposed reactors than is currently used by all residents of Atlanta, Augusta, and Savannah **combined**. [Georgia Water Coalition's Dirty Dozen 2014 report, <http://www.garivers.org/gawater/dirtydozen2014.htm>] Hot water is also discharged to the river and this "thermal pollution" stresses aquatic organisms and negatively impacts the surrounding environment. More reactors will only make this worse.

What can you do to help?

- ✓ **Contact the Georgia Public Service Commission.** They are responsible for reviewing and approving the costs spent on the new reactors. Visit <http://www.psc.state.ga.us/contactinfo.asp> or call 800-282-5813.
- ✓ **Tell your local utilities that you have concerns about nuclear power.** Urge them to redirect their investments towards less water-intensive, low-carbon, affordable, clean, & safe energy solutions such as energy efficiency, wind and solar that can help Georgia's economy and environment.
- ✓ **Urge your elected officials to support initiatives that advance energy efficiency and renewable energy.** Incentives for nuclear power should be discouraged, such as the anti-consumer Georgia Nuclear Energy Financing Act that has collected more than \$1 billion in advance for financing costs. [See <http://blog.cleanenergy.org/2014/10/01/money-and-power-how-much-will-georgia-powers-reactors-cost-us/>]
- ✓ **Join Southern Alliance for Clean Energy.** Go to www.cleanenergy.org and help us advance clean, safe & affordable energy solutions in Georgia!